

**MISPERCEPTION IN UNDERSTANDING SOFT SKILLS CONCEPT: A  
MULTI-CASE STUDY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF INDONESIA**

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**A B S T R A C T**

Sejak Alfred Binnet dan Theodore Simon (1905) memperkenalkan IQ (Intelligence Quotient) banyak pihak menganggap IQ sebagai faktor penting keberhasilan unjuk kerja seseorang di berbagai sektor kehidupan tidak terkecuali sektor pendidikan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendalami penting dan perlunya pengembangan soft skills siswa di sekolah-sekolah khususnya tingkat SD. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus dan rancangan studi multi kasus yang menggaris bawahi kegiatan pembuatan makna, sebagaimana pendekatan interpretive research menjadi dasar memahami fenomena sosial dari aktivitas pendidikan. Berdasarkan temuan penelitian diketahui secara substantif bahwa pemahaman guru, kepala sekolah, staf terkait dan orang tua siswa terhadap konsep soft skills masih kurang dan terbatas. Kegiatan belajar mengajar di sekolah berorientasi akademik dengan metode pembelajaran yang mengabaikan pentingnya pembentukan soft skills siswa. Disamping itu, soft skills dianggap tidak terkait dengan prestasi akademik, sehingga aktivitas pembelajaran kurang melibatkan potensi bagi peningkatan soft skills siswa. Di sisi lain ditemukan bahwa sekolah yang menaruh perhatian pada aspek-aspek pengembangan soft skills pada akhirnya dapat mengaktifkan potensi siswa meraih ketercapaian belajar akademik optimal. Akhirnya, secara formal dapat dikemukakan bahwa manajemen pembelajaran soft skills siswa perlu dan penting diterapkan dalam pendidikan khususnya di jenjang pendidikan dasar.

Kata-kata kunci: Conception, Perception Students, Soft Skills, Character, Holistic, Education.

**INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, many rampant violence acts such as vandalism, acts of bullying and victimization happen in many schools of Indonesia. Street brawls amongst school and university students seem to be more crazier and increased both quantitatively and qualitatively. These anarchy behaviours by educated people that occur in many parts of the country may reflect the morality problem of a nation. Meanwhile, the law enforcement is still poor and badly implemented.

The National Commission for Child Protection (KPAI) recorded at least 128 school brawl cases in year 2010, which rose to 399 in next year. The brawls claimed 82 lives in year 2011, up from 40 in 2010<sup>1</sup>. More worryingly, acts of violence involving students became more prevalent when character education was integrated into the school curriculum. This may indicate some wrongdoings with the teaching and learning process. Otherwise, there will be education discrepancies between *das sein* und *das sollen* or what is and what ought to be.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/09/29/rampant-student-brawls-and-our-character-education.html> retrieved on December 10, 2012

The Education itself should be addressed to reach determined students' new behavior as expected in the curriculum of educational institution (school) which is derived from the national curriculum. But, there is a gap between national education policy and the implementation of such policy in schools. Primary or elementary education level is very crucial and important for the success in further education such as secondary education as well as higher education (university) levels.

Inappropriate teaching treatment or instructional management incompetence in basic education either in preschools, PAUD (Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini), primary or elementary schools (Sekolah Dasar) will result bad and worse quality in further education. So that, students will perform unexpected learning behavior. Howard Gardner found that improper practices in childhood education period can negatively affect the children creativity, and this decline continues until they reach the age of 40<sup>2</sup>.

Mainstream schools at elementary education always manage its teaching and learning activities emphasize mostly on cognitive domain rather than socio emotional aspects. In fact, many developed countries have been revitalized their orientation in elementary education. Elementary schools in Japan, for instance, have reduced hours of mathematics and science and instead of it they add more hours for enhancing students' personality character.

## THE PHENOMENON OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

Education development at primary or elementary school level (SD) and junior high school level (SMP) quantitatively have shown impressive achievement, especially since the President instruction (Inpres)

prevailed in 1970s then the government launched nine years basic schooling policy (wajib belajar) for the young school age. But, the improvement in quantity it does not mean in line with its education quality, because the findings show that learning achievement of students does not good enough. The low quality of schools' graduates is caused the traditionally of teaching and learning process in which teaching activity becomes a transfer of knowledge and or forwarding information only. A teacher just to deliver directly the content of textbook in classroom as is. This activity addresses cognitive skills only in lower level of thinking, namely memory, drilling and retention.

Moreover, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IAEA) published its findings on Indonesian primary school (SD) students learning achievement in reading ability where the rank of Indonesia is number 26 of 27 countries. Math ability of Indonesian junior high school (SMP) students is number 34 of 38 countries. Awhile, learning achievement of SMP students on natural sciences is number 32 of 38 countries<sup>3</sup>.

Thence, we can say the aim of our national education as stated in the Education Law no. 20 year 2003 is still *fata morgana*. The Education process in schools mostly is carried out by forwarding information and informing the texts of books only<sup>4</sup>. Teaching and learning in schools or educational institutions are mostly still emphasizing cognitive sides of humankind with the National exams or Ujian Nasional (UN) as predictor on student learning achievement. In Indonesia, lots effort and energy are fully deployed for the success of UN implementation. As a matter of fact, UN is merely stressing on academic-hard skills. In other words, the development of non-academic soft skills is seemingly neglected.

<sup>2</sup> Endin Mujahidin, et.al., 2012. Developing Character Education Quality in Elementary School

<sup>3</sup> Raka Joni, Pembelajaran Yang Mendidik: Artikulasi Konseptual, Terapan Kontekstual dan Verifikasi Empirik (Universitas Negeri Malang, 2005: p. 1-6)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Raka Joni (2005: p. 2)

The aims of national education, as stipulated in Chapter 3 of National Education System Law No. 20/2003 is to nurture students' potential to have faith in God, develop good character, live healthy life and to be knowledgeable, creative, self-reliant, responsible and democratic citizens. In other words, with respect to its aims, our national education already envisions instilling Indonesian citizens with human values.

Many people are awed by academic achievement. A good school is equated with academic result or a successful school is measured by the total number of students passing the national exams or UN. The UN exams are not a proper tool to be used in evaluating students' learning achievements because they are not tests fit for everyone. They measure on the cognitive side of human intellect. From public view point, the favorite or most famous schools are often judged by these criteria and people proud about it<sup>5</sup>.

The Education Law above has actually focused on the importance of noble behavior as it is also the objective of the national education system. The noble behavior is derived from virtue of soft skills as well as emotional intelligence. Thus, soft skills development ought to be our main concern of the educational stakeholders both in micro and macro perspectives because nowadays we see rampant negative behaviors such as, corruption, cheating, and indiscipline manners are happened in many places and evenly distributed, at certain cases even the said manners are undertaken by educated people.

### PROBLEMATIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM: INDONESIA CONTEXT

Students (learners) in school should follow a defined programs which so-called school curriculum. Teaching and learning

activities are based on this curriculum. The school curriculum management as a part of the educational management should be also based on the aims of the said national education. The education goal and objectives of school curriculum are derived from the national education aims which are to develop students' potentialities and capabilities for becoming good people in hard skills and soft skills. From the ten students' skills mentioned in the education aim we can classify into two categories, namely academic-hard skills which are; knowledgeable and competent and non-academic-soft skills which are believe in and fear of God, noble behavior, healthy, creative, independent, democratic and responsible. It means that to develop student soft skills is already in place and written in the national education objective as aforementioned above.

Unfortunately, it is found that schools focus on academics-hard skills play a dominant role in molding public opinion. This situation occurs because the paradigm of education stakeholders (teacher, principal, parents, authority and community) closer to the academics' orientation rather than soft skills preference because they much feel of awe with kind of intellectual capacity. Consequently, the education curriculum is set up based on the admiration of achievement academic skills.

Education activities in Indonesia are the responsibility of the two Ministries, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In Indonesia all citizens must undertake nine years of compulsory of education (*wajib belajar 9 tahun*), six years at elementary level and three in junior high school. *Madrasah* is the responsibility of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. *Pesantren* is also under attention of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education and Culture has responsibility

<sup>5</sup> See in details at Aries Musnandar. 2013. Pendidikan yang Mencerdaskan. Naila Pustaka. Yogyakarta. Page 76-77

to the public schools that are owned by either government (state) or private bodies.

There are some wrongdoings of instructional management practices in mainstream schools, for instance, the attention of principal and teachers more to students' academic abilities. Thus, we must accept reality that the students' soft skills are not improved in proper and right ways. The practitioners such as principal and teachers only pay attention on how to pursue the academic target as indicated in their efforts for the national final exams. The essence of education is reduced and narrowed accordingly. The favorite and the most famous schools are often considered by such criteria and people are proud of it.

Developing soft skills in education is necessary to improve the quality of education. The law umbrella to implement soft skills in education is, actually, already in place that mentioned in the National Education System Law, No. 20/2003 Chapter 2:3<sup>6</sup>. Unfortunately, however, most of these soft skills are not at all considered in the present curricula, and disciplines and major programs that are required to enable students to practice effective facilitation of participatory processes. Studying participatory processes imply unraveling the underlying principles and values of participation and developing a deep cognitive and emotional understanding of participation and process. The ideal student and graduates would have to integrate across disciplines and skills (hard and soft skills). They would be creative and critical thinkers, team players, take responsibility for their own development, and are able to facilitate learning in groups and communities. They also have substantial management capacities and excellent communication skills.

The ideal teachers should understand all students' characteristic and potentialities. Through a competent teacher in managing learning and teaching process would create such aforementioned ideal students and

graduates. Teachers act also as manager for the implemented curricula. Good teacher is the one who can make the dreams become true or able to lift potential up to surface and thus, becoming student's star performance. In this stage, star performance is not only based merely on academic achievement but more than that, students can be able to integrate across skills in line with its curricula aim. Qualified teachers will certainly show their effort to strengthen students' cognitive as well as affective and psychomotor aspects. Therefore, smart students are also smart in emotional and social aspects by showing good performance on soft skills.

Amongst very limited primary and elementary education that also taking care of to develop students' soft skills of early childhood and elementary education as known as IHF's character school. There are a number of character schools under operation and supervision of IHF such as Play Group (PG), Kindergarten (TK A and TK B) and sekolah Semai Benih Bangsa (SBB), SD, SMP Karakter. PG, TK A, TK B, SD and SMP Karakter located in Depok Indonesia. The school is under Indonesian Heritage Foundation (IHF) which runs the character based holistic education (CBHE) owned by Dr. Ratna Megawangi and Dr. Sofyan Djalil. Not like mainstream school, IHF schools does not follow the national school curricula; IHF has its own curriculum despite this school is under supervision of the Ministry of National Education (MONE).

Researcher interviewed school founder Dr. Ratna Megawangi who leads IHF and has ideas on how to conduct teaching and learning aspect in order to improve students' soft skills. Besides, researcher also shortly interviewed certain teachers, observed instructional process and activities in class and school environment as well as interacted with IHF students. However, in this school researcher perceived

<sup>6</sup> See UU Sistem Pendidikan Nasional (the National Education Law of Indonesia) No. 20/2003 Chapter 1 and

2. See also Alwasilah, opinion, the Jakarta Post, entitled: 'Holistic education creates 'perfect people'', 01/28/2012

difficulties to get further data and explanation from them such as complete school syllabus and curricula, school fees, as well as to observe to all (more) classes. Even though, the research has shown the importance of improving soft skills for elementary school's students as needed to develop their personality.

Meanwhile, the elementary school or Sekolah Dasar Brawijaya Smart School (SD BSS) is the next research location. This school belongs to 'Yayasan Universitas Brawijaya' of Brawijaya University, the biggest State University in Malang, East Java. The school has special program to build students' character by applying/implementing various activities in class and outside of class. Although, BSS has separate organization with Brawijaya University but there are several lecturers of the University who designated to assist BSS management in terms of to develop the school as determined objectives. In making decision the presence of said lecturers is quite important because the school policy should be consulted first to them by the principal before doing implementation.

## RESEARCH FOCUS AND QUESTIONS

The main focus of this research is about students' soft skills in Indonesia which is still at low level performance as the indicators has been delineating in the beginning of this writing. Meanwhile, the quality of education results as the aims of national educational is clearly mentioned as stipulated in Chapter 3 of National Education System Law No. 20/2003 that is to nurture students' potential to have faith in God, develop good character, live healthy life and to be knowledgeable, creative, self-reliant, responsible and democratic citizens. It means that all activities in teaching and learning should support the achievement of such expected behaviors as aforementioned<sup>7</sup>.

Based on context and focus of research above, an overarching question guides this inquiry. The central question asks: how the soft skills education is managed in the elementary schools and how responsive is it to the soft skills nature of schools' management. The next question is, what are the teachers, principal, other education stakeholders' perception in understanding soft skills concept?

The research above attempts to link up to four categories and scopes of curriculum management such as core curricular, intra curricular, extra-curricular, and non-curricular. Besides, soft skills understanding of teachers and school principals would be delineated in this study which is obtained from interview, observation results and documents.

## THE CONCEPTION OF SOFT SKILLS

Daniel Goleman's research indicates that around 80% of the biggest share for an individual performance is emotional intelligence (EI). The contribution of IQ (intellectual skills) is only less than 20%<sup>8</sup>. Based on the findings above, EI is the main factors for individual success for top performance. It means, soft EI is actually quite important in spite of many people believe that intellectual capacity is the key aspect to be success in any sector of life.

However, the well known term of Emotional Intelligence (EI) was carried out to the public by Daniel Goleman in 1995 through his EI best-selling popular book entitled *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. EI, as an "engine" for soft skills (SS), indicates that the higher the potential of someone's EI, the higher the ability of someone's SS is. There is an inter-relation between EI and SS. EI does not give any meaning, unless to be transformed into Emotional Competence (EC). EC consists of a set of skills that we named as soft skills (SS).

<sup>7</sup> UU Sistem Pendidikan Nasional (the National Education Law of Indonesia) No. 20/2003 Chapter 1 and 2

<sup>8</sup> See Daniel Goleman on *Emotional Intelligence* (1995) and *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (1998).

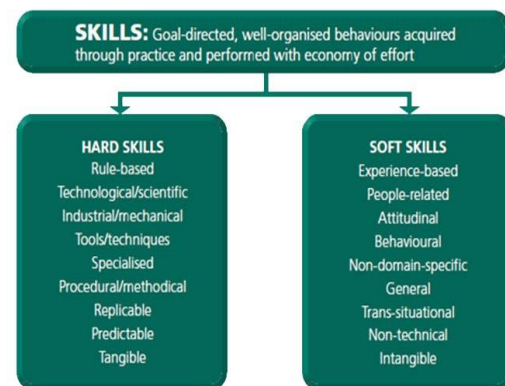
EI is all about knowing how and why people feel and take advantage to achieve positive results. Awhile, SS is a manifestation of controlled, balanced, positive and well managed emotions. It is no doubt that there is a significant relationship between EI and SS. People with poor EI will usually have bad SS. From the Goleman's point of view, EI is a major part of people management. The engineering aspect of EI and SS is the application of this science. Then, EI is a building block of soft skills. Individuals who succeeded in their careers had both excellent technical skills and soft skills, especially the ability to work positively with everyone. Technical skills are parts of many excellent education curriculums.

The soft skills need additional emphasis in school curriculum. Students will have a "leg up" as they begin a business career and life. The first soft skill is human relations. The key to effective human relations is a well-developed sense of empathy and a reputation of integrity, while Effective communication is another soft skill. Organizational culture, the third soft skill, is the importance of understanding organizational culture. Career management is the next soft skill. Finally, people need to encourage students to think about personal philosophy of life. Many personal successes hinge in individual character<sup>9</sup>.

The best student in school always relates to the one who is intellectually clever and achieves the first rank in the lessons and academic content taught at a school or specific course or program. The similar point of view can also be found in higher education level like university. People assume that the best student in university is the one who gets the highest grade point average (GPA). The higher the GPA a student has, the better predicate a student may attain. This assumption indicates that a successful performance is related to

academic results and intellectual skill. In this sense, the academic and intellectual capacity are measured from the examination result which is regrettably derived from paper and pencil test only. The comprehensive evaluation should actually be upon students' achievements that implement an integrated measurement of paper and pencil test, observation and other practical assessment results.

The multi-dimensional crisis in Indonesia is convinced originally because of the quality of people performance. The people performance quality can be simply divided into two big categories, namely the technical competency named hard skills and the non technical competency that is known as soft skills (SS). The soft skills concept always has interchangeable position with some terms such as EI, personal skills and non technical skills. Meanwhile, individual's skills performance consists of hard skills and soft skills. The digestive concepts of hard and soft skills can be seen in the following picture:



Picture 1.1 Skills – Hard Skills – Soft Skills<sup>10</sup>

The key success in work is to make hard and soft skills supplement each other. In addition, those who perform better actually have both technical and people skills. This is supported by Roseline Shakir in 2009 who related hard skills to technical work that is observable and quantifiable.

<sup>9</sup> The "Soft Skills" of Success, James K. Wellington: Vital Speeches of the Day. New Your: Aug 1, 2005. Vol. 71, Iss. 20 pg.628, 7 pgs

<sup>10</sup> Source:  
<http://www.google.co.id/#q=managing+soft+skills+pictures> retrieved on March 2, 2012

Hard skills normally refer to the normal procedure or practical tasks that are typically easy to be observed, quantified and measured<sup>11</sup>.

The training of hard skills is relatively not difficult to be done for necessary technical skills. In contrast, soft skills are not taught easily. Soft skills can be categorized into three parts, namely personal, interpersonal, problem solving and decision making skills.

## SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AT SD BSS

BSS is a school administered by the education foundation of Brawijaya University. This school was established in 2005 and begun from elementary school (SD). Not long after that the secondary school (SMP) is established, and then followed by its senior high school (SMA). The location of BSS takes place in Brawijaya University area. This university appointed two lecturers for occupying as BSS Directors. The backgrounds of these directors are from Husbandry faculty, and Mathematics, and Natural Science faculty. They help principals of SD/SMP/SMA in improving the education's quality.

The Director BSS appointed a coordinator team to establish the character education program for SD, SMPA and SMA of BSS by attending a well designed education activities. The main goal of this program is to inculcate good character values into students' personalities. The team members for character education have been conducting various activities in order to improve students' character and soft skills.

The activities can make students and teachers of BSS have good discipline and respect the time. The special regulation is enacted by ordering teachers to come earlier. At 6 o'clock in the morning, teachers and principal should be ready in front of the

schoolyard gate to welcome students before entering classroom.

This activity may form a good discipline, namely punctuality, not only for students but also for teachers. Maintaining the punctuality is certainly a way to improve personal soft skills quality. This activity is considered as an effective part to build students character which are expected by the government and school. They believed that a character education is important and should be included in school curriculum. At this point, student's character will improve the quality achievement of school.

Furthermore, they held benchmarking program by visiting other schools, conducting seminar and training in order to improve the students' character programs at BSS. School counselor of BSS should concern on this character issues, but unfortunately she is rarely involved especially in designing and developing a well managed character program. The initiative comes from the top level management of BSS. However, schools in which they did benchmarking program have similar activities in developing character education. The top level management of the schools have also the same opinion about students' soft skills and character. According to them, character education program ought to be conducted through religion subject based on one way communication. There seems to be teacher centered activity in classroom without any direct relevant examples conducted by teacher in daily life either inside or outside the classroom.

## THE CONCEPT ON SOFT SKILLS EDUCATION

The school principals and supervisor agree with popular concept playing while learning instead of playing is learning. The teaching and learning activities in schools are directed to accomplish certain education

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/education/work-and-relationship-between-hard-and-soft-skills-education-essay.php> retrieved on March 2, 2012

objectives. The character education is interpreted as in line with soft skills development. But, they limit the meaning of soft skills to noble behavior or relates to interpersonal skills such as communicate with others, discipline, respect others (including to elder people), tell the truth, helpfulness, and other related noble behaviors. In this school people understanding, there is no connection between soft skills and hard skills. In the other words soft skills does not affect academic achievement results positively. Soft skills is separated from hard skills.

The character traits as mentioned above do not have direct relation with hard skills. Therefore, the result of hard skills performance is different from the result of character performance. The principals and supervisor perceived that character education cannot lead directly to better academic skills, because character is about the daily behavior or interaction with others. It has nothing to do with academic achievement, known as non academic skills. They thought characters and soft skills are intertwined. They regard soft skills as character of behavior only.

Based on their views, soft skills development could be done through extra curricular activities and they attach soft skills program within the subject matter. They believed that soft skills are similar to the character education which emphasizes much on the rapport skills rather than on developing real soft skills such as creative and innovative activities. The problem solving power, the personal effectiveness, tactfully solution skills are actually not character domain, because character relates much more to inward looking facet, meanwhile soft skills link to both inward and onward looking aspects.

From this perspective, they assume that character education is different from academic performance result. This perception arises because they include non academic skills such as dancing, sport, and arts as character performance. On the other hand, they also call the character education

as personality development. Briefly, character education is an effort to enhance students' moral and norms closer to the religious values.

## TEACHER PERCEPTION ON SOFT SKILLS

Perception is the ability to see, hear, and become aware of something through the senses. Hence, the perception is a way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something; a mental impression. After getting common perception, a man may construct concept in the form of abstract idea, to build framework of something is perceived. In general, a framework is conceptual structure that is intended to serve as a guidance for building something that expands the structure into something useful. A framework is elaborated with learning activities to achieve the goals.

A teacher's perception creates teacher's conception on soft skills (SS). It means that if a school teacher is having incorrect perception on SS, then it will automatically mislead him/her to the conception of SS. The perception of SS is an important point for school teacher at the beginning, prior to construct a conception of SS itself. Once the conception is correct, we may arrange the suitable development programs. The good learning programs of SS will be effectively implemented when a school has very good conception on SS. Otherwise, the process of learning program may create unexpected objectives.

SS conception at the common teachers' perception will bring similar platform in implementing program. With some clear vision and mission that are embedded in teachers' mind; a school could achieve the defined goals. In terms of SD BSS case, SS conception is built upon the ability of a teacher perception in



understanding the concept<sup>12</sup>. However, based on the findings all school people understanding on SS concept are likely misperception, because they view SS as separate parts instead of connected parts between inward and outward looking aspects.

### THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE FROM TOP LEVEL MANAGEMENT

In management concept, the role and influence from top level person within an organization is important. Without any direction and supervision from the top level person, it will be impossible to get better result. Supervision tasks can be done by top level management in school. According to Glickman, the supervisor's tasks are not only taken by the principal, but also by subject area specialist, assistant principal, chair person, head teacher or central office consultant.

The influence of leadership that is applied by Ratna Megawangi to all teachers and staff significantly has been occurring for long time. This influence of leadership creates good performance result of students' SS as well as to direct teachers to have better teaching approach. Some researchers have shown that IHF graduates have been performing better characters than other school graduates.

The central element of applied management in various sectors is the top level people in an organization. Manager, leader and top level people in an organization are the key to get better performance results. In this context, Ratna Megawangi, for instance, has proved her influence in the school performance.

Top level people involvement in applied management is primarily needed to get better process and results. This is because management is a process that

involves humankind and to apply human approach. The leadership is driven by man to encourage people (subordinates) to work as expected by the organization<sup>13</sup>.

### FACTORS INFLUENCE TO TEACHER PERCEPTION

The power of educational leadership takes place effectively in many schools that gives strong influence to educationists (teachers and the like) perception. Besides, there is a good system taken place at IHF Schools. The role of Ratna Megawangi is also quite significant to change the teachers' perception upon the importance of soft skills (non-academic skills) in education. Ratna has been intensively involved to run the CBHE. She actively delivers content of CBHE for IHF's teachers either SBB or non SBB schools including SD Karakter. Briefly, the teachers' perception and conception of SD Karakter IHF about soft skills and character education can be formed firmly and much better than the teachers' perception and conception on soft skills from public schools. They are dominant factors which contribute significantly to the teachers' perception and conception on soft skills. Among such factors are leadership, a good teachers' training and development system and the role of influential leader<sup>14</sup>.

### SOFT SKILLS CONCEPT AND DEVELOPMENT

Soft skills concept from the eyes of principal, teachers and other educationists of SD BSS is identical with character concept. Therefore, they regard soft skills as good personal behavior like respect others, telling the truth, discipline and other good deeds. They do not elaborate the concept of soft skills as professional acumen such as to overcome with problem.

Religious and PPKn (Civics Education) are the main subjects to develop

<sup>12</sup> See Aries Musnandar (2016). The Instructional Management of Students Soft Skills In Elementary Schools: A Multi-Case Study at Sekolah Karakter Indonesia Heritage Foundation (IHF) and Sekolah Dasar Brawijaya Smart School (BSS). Page. 140-153

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. P. 154-160

<sup>14</sup> Ibid p. 154-160

concept of character into practice. Briefly, soft skills concept for BSS is equal to character education. The model of Character-Based Holistic Education (CBHE) is a concept of IHF SD Karakter in understanding soft skills concept. This model has been applied to their TK and SD Karakter. The CBHE model applies some theories of social, emotional, cognitive, physical, moral, and spiritual. At SD Karakter of IHF the program of CBHE is more complete than other schools. IHF has created a model of holistic education for elementary level of education with the best quality.

### PROPOSITIONS FROM RESEARCH FINDINGS

Based on data analysis, the research focuses and findings, the propositions of soft skills instruction are described as follow:

- The success of education program is achieved when the initiative and involvement of top level people are in place to trigger the implementation of a program and play their important role in supervising the programs.
- The success on students' soft skills quality will be reached if teachers have correct perception and enough understanding on soft skills. The success of students' soft skills quality is started from the teachers' correct understanding on what the soft skills is.
- The concept of good soft skills is same as building rapport which will be good in dealing with people such as helping each other, being kind to people, and respecting elder people, etc.
- Soft skills are good behaviors but not related with academic achievement.
- The religion involvement at teaching and learning process is as an optional subject not only able to make students understand very well about the essence of Islamic values, but also to make student become more faith.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the research context, the data description, the research findings and the discussion of findings, the research results can be explained as follows:

- The Indonesian human resource is still in an unfavorable quality.
- Student character is the main issue in education due to reprehensible phenomena, unexpected behavior is shown frequently in public sphere.
- Unfortunately, soft skills are not properly considered in the existing school's curriculum. They (school and education stakeholders) focuses more on intellectual or hard skills and academic achievements only.
- In fact, the students' academic achievements and students' soft skills (non-academic) performance have not shown promising results, yet.
- In reference to the research result that soft skills affect the hard skills quality. Therefore, students' soft skills will enable and enhance their academic achievement.
- The soft skills development programs will bridge the gaps in social life.
- The teacher and principal should have the right perception and understanding on soft skills concept that can enhance the students' academic achievements
- Special soft skills development programs for teachers and principal on SS are also important to be held in schools.
- The transmission methods for soft skills development programs can be upheld through formal and / or hidden curriculum. Meanwhile, the hidden curriculum is a side effect of a teaching and learning activity as well as a broader and implicit concept. In hidden curriculum soft skills are not designed specifically into subjects.

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